

# A CIA Cover Is Blown

## - An Agent Dies

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The cover of CIA officer Richard S. Welch was blown a year ago in a U.S. publication, a few weeks ago an Athens newspaper named Welch as the CIA's station chief in the Greek capital. Last night, he was murdered outside his home there as he returned from a Christmas party.

For months the American intelligence community has warned that

disclosure of CIA operations through congressional investigations and identification of personnel in anti-CIA publications could have tragic consequences. Welch's slaying by three unidentified gunmen will no doubt fuel that controversy.

Welch, 46, was listed on the official U.S. Embassy roster as special assistant to Ambassador Jack B. Kurbisch with the rank of first secretary. However, people who knew him well were aware of the fact that he served as the intelligence agency's station chief.

AS FAR AS is known, Welch is the first CIA officer operating under what is called in intelligence parlance as "light cover" to be killed by terrorists anywhere in the world.

Most CIA officers serving abroad are listed under embassy titles as if they were foreign service officers, usually in the political section. CIA, of course, has a more clandestine

service which uses much more complex covers for its officers.

Early last year, when Welch was CIA station chief in Lima, Peru, a Washington quarterly called "Counterspy" published by Fifth Estate, a group of ex-intelligence people, published a list of 150 CIA station chiefs around the world. Welch was among them.

One contributor to the publication is Philip Agee, a "deep-cover" CIA agent in Latin America who left the agency in 1969 and decided to blow the whistle on his former employer in his book "Inside the Company: CIA Diary." In this detailed account of CIA operations, he lists scores of Latin and American employees and agents.

IN ONE Counterspy article last year Agee said: "The most effective and important systematic efforts to combat CIA that can be undertaken right now are, I think, the identification, exposure, and neutralization of its people working abroad. Working through careful analysis of U.S. government employees country by country abroad, the CIA people can be identified and exposed through periodic bulletins disseminated to subscribers, particularly individuals and organizations in the foreign country in question."

The president of the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers, which

has been expressing concern for the safety of American foreign service officers because of their identification as CIA officers condemned the assassination last night. In a statement, the organization's president, David Phillips said that Welch's death "represents the tragic kinds of occurrences which became inevitable when Mr. Agee initiated and others associated themselves with the sordid practice of identifying American intelligence officers overseas."

ONE U.S. intelligence source quoted by The Associated Press said: "We've had an American gunned down by other Americans fingering him — right or wrong — as a CIA agent."

It was the Athens News, an English language daily published in the Greek capital that less than a month ago printed a list of top CIA officials in Greece — including Welch — along with their home addresses and telephone numbers. The paper said it received the information from a group calling itself the Committee of Greeks and Greek Americans.

Greek police reported that Welch and his Peruvian-German wife, Kiki, had just returned to their villa in suburban Psychicho from a reception at the U.S. ambassador's house, when gunmen waiting in ambush opened fire.

WELCH WAS hit three times in the face. His wife ran for safety. After the gunmen sped away in a black car, she returned to find her husband lying on the pavement. Welch was rushed to a hospital where he died minutes later. Mrs. Welch was unharmed.